

Writing Activity

Constructing a Complete Draft

Using the writing you did when selecting an organizational approach for your persuasive paper, write a complete first draft of your paper. Remember that your argument will evolve as you write, so your ideas will most likely change as you draft.

Santi DeRosa's First Draft

In this brief draft, note how Santi DeRosa incorporates information and examples from his life, as well as from outside sources. As he wrote, DeRosa did not worry about grammar, punctuation, and mechanics; instead, he concentrated on getting his main ideas on paper.

The Objectification of Woman. Who's Fault Is it?

Santi DeRosa

Are women being objectified by a university that has a responsibility to treat women with equality and not as second class citizens?

I say yes. All you need to do is look at the athletics department to see the way women are treated. What I don't understand is that in the year 2003, women are still allowing themselves to be used in such a way

In the past week I have read a couple of news articles from the campus newspaper that got me a little perplexed. Maybe it's the fact that I have a son the age of the female students in the articles. Or, maybe it's the fact that I have a wife, a sister, a mother and nieces that I respect as people and as women. The articles upset my sense of right and wrong.

Joe Watson wrote the first article, "Risky behavior not policed in university recruiting" and explains how high school football players that visit the university for the purpose of being recruited are met by coeds, of which, thirty-five of the thirty-seven are females. Is this just a coincidence? No, I don't think so. It is no coincidence when schools from all over the country use the same practices to recruit high school players. The reporter took an informal survey of 117 Division 1-A football programs nationwide and found many with the same recruiter make-up. Louisiana State has 55 females; Alabama leads the way with 100 females. The university advertises every spring for new recruiters. Most come from sororities. The football coaches say they prefer using females because that's the way the other schools do it and the players coming to campus to be recruited would be uncomfortable if they were greeted by males, because they are used to female recruiters. I think that this is just an excuse to turn a blind eye to a potential problem. Most

of the players who come to be recruited are 17 and 18 years old. There have been many reports of under-age drinking at local clubs and parties and sometimes sex according to some senior recruiters. The people interviewed for the article who are in support of the “hostess” program defend it by saying that “the recruiters perform respectable duties during high school recruits’ campus visits.” Does the responsibility of “performing respectable duties” end when they leave the campus for a party? I believe that Becky Stoltz, a fourth year recruiter said it best when interviewed, “It’s a disaster waiting to happen.”

The second news article I read was by Megan Rudebeck. The story titled “‘Hot’ recruiters draw prospects” seems to be defending the program. Ms. Rudebeck not only talked to the coaches that run the program; she spoke with recruiters and players as well. She almost had me convinced that I might have been over reacting. I started to think that here is a woman writing a story that seems to be in defense of the way the recruiting program works. Maybe I am reacting wrongly. That is until the last line of the story when she quotes Zach Krula, a freshman offensive lineman. Zach says, “We’ve got a lot of hot girls, we might as well utilize them.” After a few minutes I started to think to myself, why isn’t Ms. Rudebeck insulted by that comment? Is she, as well as the women that are part of the program, so brain-washed with the need to get quality players into the football program that they are willing to overlook the fact that they are being “utilized.”

As ideas for further development, Santi made these notes at the end of his initial draft:

Short history of women’s struggle for equality.
Use family stories to tell history of strong women?
Define the objectification of women.
Conclusion.

Revising

Once you have a full draft of your persuasive text, you still have much to do. First, however, you should set the draft aside so that you can gain some critical distance. You can then read it with fresh eyes. When you approach your work this way, you will find it easier to notice reasons that are irrelevant, evidence that is not fully developed, or places where a compelling visual might add to the impact of your argument.

As you work to revise your early drafts, do not be concerned about doing a great deal of heavy editing. When you revise, you will probably change the content and structure of your paper, so time spent fixing problems with sentence style or grammar, punctuation, or mechanics at this stage is often wasted.

When you reread the first draft of your persuasive writing, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- How clearly and persuasively am I making my point? Am I sure my readers can understand it? How easily will they be able to restate the thesis?
- How effectively does all of my evidence support that main point? (Sometimes it is easy to include evidence that seems persuasive but that does not support the point you are arguing for.)
- Are there other photographs, charts, or graphs that might help make my point?
- Are there parts of my paper that might confuse a reader? If so, how might I clarify them?
- Do I restate or allude to my main point at the end of my paper and also explain to the reader what I would like him or her to *do* (to vote, to write a letter to the editor, to *do* what I have been arguing for)?

Technology can help you revise and edit your writing more easily. Use your word processor's track-changes tool to try out revisions and editing changes. After you have had time to think about the possible changes, you can "accept" or "reject" them. Also, you can use your word processor's comment tool to write reminders to yourself when you get stuck with a revision or some editing task.

Because it is so difficult even for experienced writers to see their emerging writing with a fresh eye, it is almost always useful to ask classmates, friends, or family members to read and comment on drafts of your persuasive writing.

WRITER'S Workshop | Responding to Full Drafts

Working with one or two classmates, read each paper, and offer comments and questions that will help each of you see your papers' strengths and weaknesses. Consider the following questions as you do:

- What is your first impression of this draft? How effective is the title at drawing you in? Why? What are your overall suggestions for improvement? What part(s) of the text are especially persuasive? What reasons could use more support? Indicate what you like about the draft, and provide positive

and encouraging feedback to the writer.

- How tight is the writer's focus? Does the paper wander a bit? If so, where?
- How effective is the introduction? What suggestions can you make to improve it?
- What is the author's thesis or main claim? How could it be expressed or supported more effectively?
- Are there parts that are confusing? Where would you like more details or examples to help clarify the writer's meaning?

(continued)

- How accurate and appropriate is the supporting evidence? How clearly does the author indicate the sources of statistics and other supporting evidence?
- Might visuals such as charts, tables, photographs, or cartoons make the text more convincing?
- How clearly and effectively does the writer present any opposing points of view? How effectively does the writer answer opposing viewpoints? How might the writer acknowledge, concede, and/or refute them more effectively?
- How well has the writer demonstrated an awareness of readers' knowledge, needs, and/or expectations? How might the writer demonstrate greater awareness?
- How carefully has the writer avoided logical fallacies?
- What could be added or changed to the conclusion to make it more effective? How well does it tie everything together? If action is called for, to what extent does it make you want to take action?

Notes on Santi DeRosa's First Draft, from a Conference with His Instructor

After writing his first draft, DeRosa met with his instructor, who thought his topic was promising but indicated that he needed more support on recruiting practices at his school and at other campuses. Together they brainstormed more ideas to develop his paper in more depth. The practice of using female students to help recruit male athletes led to these objections, which are more completely developed in DeRosa's final draft (see pages 259–263):

1. Using women for their bodies
2. Manipulation
3. A program that reinforces age-old notions of exploitation
4. Limits and defines women's roles
5. Under the guise of school spirit
6. Better add some more extensive research info

Responding to Readers' Comments

Once they have received feedback on their writing from peers, instructors, friends, and others, all writers have to figure out what to do with that feedback.

The first thing to do with any feedback is to consider carefully what your readers have said about your text. In his case, DeRosa arranged a conference with his writing teacher, who helped him brainstorm some specific objections to the recruiting program at his school to give his argument more depth.

As with all feedback, it is important to really listen to it and consider what your reader has to say. Then it is up to you, as the author, to decide how to come to terms with these suggestions. You may decide to reject some comments, of course; other comments, though, deserve your attention, as they are the words of real readers speaking to you about how to improve your text. It is especially important to deal with comments from readers indicating that they are unconvinced by your argument. You sometimes may find that comments from more than one reader contradict each other. In that case, you need to use your own judgment to decide which reader's comments are on the right track.

In the final version of his paper, you can see how Santi DeRosa responded to his instructor's comments, as well as to his own review of his first draft.

connect

mhconnectcomposition.com

Using commas with
nonrestrictive words or
word groups QL8010



Knowledge of Conventions

When effective writers edit their work, they attend to the conventions that will help readers process their work. These include genre conventions, documentation, format, usage, grammar, and mechanics. By attending to these conventions in your writing, you make reading a more pleasant experience for readers.

Editing

connect

mhconnectcomposition.com

Revising and Editing
overview (also Drafting)
QL8008

The last task in any writing project is editing—the final polishing of your document. When you edit and polish your writing, you make changes to your sentence structures and word choices to improve your style and to make your writing clearer and more concise. You also check your work to make sure it adheres to conventions of grammar, usage, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling. Use the spell-check function of your word-processing program, but be sure to double-check your spelling personally. If you have used sources in your paper, make sure you are following the documentation style your instructor requires.

As with overall revision of your work, this final editing and polishing is most effective if you can put your text aside for a few days and come back to it with fresh eyes. Because checking conventions is easier said than done, though, we strongly recommend that you ask classmates, friends, and tutors to read your work as well.

To assist you with editing, we offer here a round-robin editing activity focused on citing sources correctly.

See Chapter 20 for
more on documenting
sources using MLA or
APA style.